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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 H-01 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 PM-05 NSC-05 SS-15
IO-13 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 AGR-01 AID-05
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R 091338Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9563

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 11843

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, US, KE, UG
SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE ON UGANDA

REF: STATE 196396

1. THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ARE KEYED TO THE ALLEGATIONS TRANSMITTED IN THE REFERENCE.

(A) KENATCO IS NOT OWNED BY THE KENYATTA FAMILY, BUT RATHER BY THE GOVERNMENT OF KENYA. IT IS A PARASTATAL COMPANY, OPERATED ON A PURELY COMMERCIAL BASIS, IN COMPETITION WITH PRIVATE TRUCKING FIRMS. AS THE LARGEST KENYAN TRUCKING COMPANY, KENATCO MOVES A SIZEABLE PERCENTAGE OF GOODS FROM THE PORT OF MOMBASA TO UGANDA AS WELL AS TO DESTINATIONS THROUGHOUT KENYA. THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN ABLE TO DEVELOP NO INFORMATION ON ANY "EXCLUSIVE CONTRACT" BETWEEN KENATCO AND AMIN, BUT IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT SUCH A CONTRACT EXISTS. IN ANY CASE, VISUAL OBSERVATION ALONG THE ROAD TO UGANDA INDICATES THAT A GREAT MANY TRUCKING COMPANIES IN ADDITION TO KENATCO ARE IN FACT TRANSPORTING GOODS TO UGANDA. LITTLE, IF ANY, COFFEE HAS BEEN TRANSPORTED BY ROAD FROM UGANDA TO MOMBASA DURING THE PAST 6-8 MONTHS. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF KENYA AND UGANDA REGARDING THE TRANSIT THROUGH KENYA OF GOODS
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TO OR FROM UGANDA. IT IS TRUE THAT UP UNTIL A YEAR OR SO AGO, DURING THE PERIOD OF EXCEEDINGLY HIGH COFFEE PRICES, ARMED GUARDS WERE PROVIDED FOR ALL TRUCKS HAULING COFFEE BECAUSE OF THE HIGH INCIDENCE OF HIJACKING. THE ARMED GUARDS WERE NOT PROVIDED TO PROTECT AMIN'S PROPERTY AS IMPLIED IN THE ALLEGATION.

(B) PETER MUIGAI KENYATTA HAS WIDE-RANGING BUSINESS INTERESTS,

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AND HE MAY, INDEED, BE SELLING THINGS TO THE UGANDAN GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, FOODSTUFFS AND UNIFORMS ARE NOT ITEMS IN WHICH COMPANIES WITH WHICH HE IS ASSOCIATED NORMALLY DEAL.

(C) THE EMBASSY HAS SEEN NO EVIDENCE THAT VICE PRESIDENT MOI AND "SEVERAL OTHER KENYAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS" ARE INVOLVED IN THE SMUGGLING AND MARKETING OF UGANDAN COFFEE. AS FAR AS WE ARE AWARE, MOST UGANDAN COFFEE IS SMUGGLED BY UGANDANS, WHO PREFER TO SELL THEIR COFFEE IN KENYA, WHERE MARKET PRICES ARE SIGNIFI-CANTLY HIGHER THAN THE CONTROLLED PRICES PAID BY THE UGANDAN GOVERNMENT. THE EMBASSY CAN FIND NO EVIDENCE THAT THE VICE PRESIDENT HAS EVER BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR "RETURNING SOME FLEEING UGANDAN REFUGEES TO AMIN" AND CONSIDERS IT TOTALLY OUT OF CHARACTER.

(D) KENYA HAS AN EXCELLENT RECORD OF RECEPTIVITY TOWARD UGANDAN REFUGEES, AND ITS TREATMENT OF THOSE SETTLED IN KENYA HAS BEEN GOOD. A NEW WELCOMING AND SCREENING CENTER HAS RECENTLY BEEN COMPLETED JUST NORTH OF NAIROBI. UNDER AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF KENYA AND THE UNITES NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, UGANDANS WHO HAVE BEEN DOCUMENTED BY THE UNHC AND THE GOK AS REFUGEES MAY RESIDE AND WORK IN KENYA ON AN EQUAL BASIS WITH KENYAN CITIZENS. THE NEED NO SPECIAL WORK PERMITS OR OTHER AUGHORIZATIONS FOR RESIDCNCE, AS DO OTHER FOREIGNERS. BISHOP OTIM WAS REGISTERED WITH THE UN HIGH COM-MISSIONER FOR REFUGEES ON MAY 6, 1977, ALONG WITH HIS WIFE AND SIX CHILDREN. HE HAS SINCE BEEN NAMED BY THE ANGLICAN BISHOP
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OF KENYA TO BE BISHOP FOR THE UGANDAN REFUGEE ANGLICAN COMMUNITY. ON JULY 3, 1978 OTIM AND HIS FAMILY WERE ISSUED VISITORS' VISAS FOR THE UK. THE UNHCR SAYS THAT THE BISHOP HAS EXPERIENCED NO DIFFICULTIES AT ALL WITH THE KENYAN GOVERNMENT. THE KENYAN GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO RECEIVE UGANDAN REFUGEES, AND THERE HAS BEEN NO "CRACKDOWN," WHATEVER THAT TERM MAY BE INTENDED TO MEAN.

(E) THE EMBASSY HAS CONFIRMED FROM VERY RELIABLE SOURCES WITHIN THE KENYAN POLICE AND SECURITY ORGANIZATION THAT NO KNOWN UGANDAN STATE RESEARCH BUREAU PEOPLE ARE ALLOWED TO OPERATE IN KENYA. IT IS, OF COURSE, POSSIBLE THAT SOME SRB AGENTS ARE HERE CLANDESTINELY, BUT OUR SOURCES SAY THEY DOUBT IT. IN ANY CASE THEY HAD NEVER SEEN CONVINCING EVIDENCE OF ANY ACTIONS TAKEN BY SRB PEOPLE HERE.

2. COMMENT: THE THRUST OF THE ALLEGATIONS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE KENYAN GOVERNMENT IS CONSCIUOUSLY SUPPORTING IDI AMIN IS ABSURD. AMIN IS IN AS BAD AN ODOR HERE AS HE IS ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD. A GREAT MANY KENYAN CITIZENS, PARTICULARLY THOSE EMPLOYED BY THE EAST AFRICA COMMON SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS, SIMPLY DISAPPEARED IN UGANDA. NUMEROUS OTHERS WERE ARRESTED ON TRUMPED UP CHARGES, OR NO CHARGES AT ALL. RELATIONS BETWEEN

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NAIROBI AND KAMPALA HAVE MORE OFTEN THAN NOT BEEN STRAINED TO THE POINT OF OPEN HOSTILITY. AMIN HAS NEVER FORGIVEN THE KENYANS FOR COOPERATING WITH THE ISRAELIS ON THE ENTEBBE RAID, AND IT WILL BE REMEMBERED THAT JUST A YEAR OR SO AGO AMIN WAS PUBLICLY THREATENING TO "BOMB NAIROBI AND MOMBASA OFF THE MAP."

3. ON THE OTHER HAND, KENYA HAS NO LAW AGAINST COMMERCE WITH UGANDA, AND, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE CLOSING OF THE TANZANIAN BORDER, KENYA NEEDS AS MUCH OF THE UGANDAN MARKET AS IT CAN GET. CONSEQUENTLY, KENYAN BUSINESSMEN, INCLUDING SOME OF THOSE IN GOVERNMENT, MAY WELL BE DOING BUSINESS WITH THE UGANDAN GOVERNMENT. BUT THE MOTIVE IS PURELY COMMERCIAL, NOT POLITICAL SUPPORT OF THE AMIN REGIME.

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4. THE AEMASSY HOPES THAT THE DEPARTMENT WILL MAKE AN EFFORT TO SEE THAT INTERESTED CONGRESSMEN ARE DISABUSED OF ANY IDEA THAT KENYA SYMPATHIZES WITH, OR IS LENDING SUPPORT TO, THE AMIN REGIME.
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